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DEXTER™

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MARVEL

DEXTER

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Jeff Lindsay

DEXTER™

#1

DEXTER™

HELLO
my name is
Dexter

OF COURSE IT WAS A MISTAKE...

MIAMI, FLORIDA.

...AND FOR ME, MISTAKES ALWAYS START THE SAME WAY...

SPARE CHANGE?

...TRYING TO BE HUMAN.

SURE...

I GOT SOMETHIN' FOR YA RIGHT HERE...

AND FOR ME, MISTAKES ALWAYS SEEM TO *END* THE SAME WAY, TOO.

NNNHH...

CLANG

SHAME ON YOU. THOSE THINGS ARE *DANGEROUS*...

IT'S REALLY VERY SIMPLE: I JUST HAVE TO RELAX AND BE ME.

IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOURSELF.

IT HELPS US RELATE TO OTHERS, AND IT BUILDS SELF-ESTEEM.

DINER

AND IT'S JUST AS IMPORTANT TO THINK OF OTHERS.

SO ALWAYS TRY TO CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF.

I DON'T ASK FOR MUCH...

JUST THE OCCASIONAL EVENING OUT WITH DESERVING FRIENDS...

GUILTY, GUILTY, GUILTY...

YOU WOULD THINK THAT LIFE WOULD BE EASY FOR SOMEONE WITH TASTES AS SIMPLE AS MINE...

...BUT SOMEHOW, REAL LIFE ALWAYS SEEMS TO GET IN THE WAY.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HAVE LEARNED BY NOW.

IT ALL STARTED INNOCENTLY ENOUGH...

...WITH AN INVITATION.

OF COURSE I DIDN'T EVEN *THINK* ABOUT GOING.

I MEAN, WHY WOULD I GO? IT WOULD BE NOTHING BUT AN EXERCISE IN SENTIMENTAL SCORE-KEEPING.

AND ALTHOUGH *HUMAN BEINGS* CAN BE VERY SENTIMENTAL...

...DEXTER IS NOT ACTUALLY HUMAN, SO HE HAS NO SENTIMENTS...

...AND HE KEEPS HIS VERY OWN PRIVATE SCORE IN A LITTLE ROSEWOOD BOX.

DEXTER?

UNFORTUNATELY, RITA SAW THE INVITATION.

YES, DEAR?

UM...THIS IS--YOUR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION?

YES?

OF *COURSE* WE'RE GOING. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU WERE LIKE IN HIGH SCHOOL!

SHE THOUGHT IT SOUNDED LIKE A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT DEXTER'S PAST.

I WANT TO MEET ALL YOUR OLD FRIENDS, HEAR ALL THE *STORIES* ABOUT YOU!

OH, DEXTER, IT WILL BE SO MUCH *FUN!*

YES, DEAR...

I DON'T KNOW WHY WOMEN NEED TO KNOW THESE THINGS ABOUT MEN...

TWO DAYS LATER.

...BUT THEY DO NEED TO KNOW...AND RITA IS NO EXCEPTION.

AND OF COURSE, I HAVE TO PLAY ALONG TO MAINTAIN MY DISGUISE.

CLASS 1991

CLASS 1991

CLASS 1991

AND THAT'S HOW I FOUND MYSELF STANDING IN THE GYM OF COCONUT GROVE HIGH SCHOOL...

...DRINKING SOME TRULY NASTY PUNCH AND STARING AROUND ME...

...AT A ROOM FULL OF PEOPLE I WAS QUITE SURE I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE, AND CERTAINLY NEVER WANTED TO SEE AGAIN.

IT WAS A WONDERFUL SCENE, ESPECIALLY IF YOU LIKE ZOMBIE MOVIES...

WHOO-HOO!

...BECAUSE IT REALLY LOOKED LIKE SOME ALIEN DEATH RAY HAD TRANSFERRED THE PERSONALITIES OF A GROUP OF SUBNORMAL TEENS INTO THE BODIES OF BALDING, OVERWEIGHT, MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS.

AND UNFORTUNATELY...

...IT SEEMED TO BE CONTAGIOUS.

COME ON...

WHAT?

COME ON, DEXTER. TRY TO HAVE SOME *FUN!*

I ONLY KNOW ONE WAY TO HAVE FUN, AND I WAS PRETTY SURE THIS WASN'T THE TIME AND PLACE.

AS TEMPTING AS THE IDEA WAS...

DEXTER, COME *ON!*

EEEE-HAH!

BUT I KNOW A CUE WHEN I HEAR ONE.

EE-HAH...?

AFTER ALL: WHEN IN ROME, WEAR A TOGA.

HOO-EEEE!

AND WHEN AT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION...

...APPARENTLY, YOU ALSO WEAR A TOGA.

A TOGA-- AND VERY LITTLE ELSE.

WHAT AN INTERESTING CLASS YOU HAVE, DEXTER.

OH, THEY'RE INTERESTING ALL RIGHT.

THE MAN WHO FLASHED YOU IS JUDGE GRAHAM.

AWRITE... I KNOW YOU REMEMBER THIS ONE!

"I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU."

OH, I *LOVE* THIS SONG...

BUT DEXTER, DIDN'T YOU HAVE ANY--OH, YOU KNOW. LIKE A *BEST FRIEND?*

WELL, UM..

OF COURSE I DIDN'T HAVE FRIENDS. YOU HAVE TO CARE ABOUT PEOPLE TO HAVE FRIENDS.

I, UM...I WAS KIND OF A LONER.

WELL, YOU MUST HAVE BEEN CLOSE TO *SOMEBODY!*

CLOSE? WELL, TRUTHFULLY, WHAT I DID HAVE WAS A FEW REALLY CLOSE ENEMIES. LIKE--

IT CAN'T BE...!

STEVE GONZALEZ...?

THE STEVE GONZALEZ?! OH MY GOD--

YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOU KNEW HIM!

OH, YES. I KNEW STEVE GONZALEZ...

...BUT I WOULDN'T REALLY CALL HIM A *FRIEND.*

SLAM

GIMME THE SANDWICH.

MARICON...

GONZALEZ HAD JUST COME OVER FROM CUBA.

IT HAD TO BE HARD ON HIM-- ADJUSTING TO A NEW LIFE IN A NEW COUNTRY--

--AND HE WAS A LITTLE BEHIND IN MOST SUBJECTS.

BUT HE WAS A COUPLE OF YEARS OLDER. AND A LITTLE BIGGER AND STRONGER, TOO.

WHICH GAVE HIM A REAL EDGE IN PHYS ED.

OKAY, BOYS...HIT THE SHOWERS!

I DON'T KNOW WHY HE MADE ME HIS SPECIAL TARGET...

...BUT HE DID.

WHUD

AND IT BEGAN TO GET--

--A LITTLE BIT ANNOYING.

MY CLOTHES...?

IN FACT...

...MORE THAN A LITTLE BIT.

CLEARLY, SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT GONZALEZ.

I KNEW VERY WELL WHAT I *WANTED* TO DO.

BUT EVEN AT THAT TENDER AGE, I ALSO KNEW THAT DOING IT WOULD DRASTICALLY AFFECT MY ACADEMIC STANDING, SO...

...I DID THE NEXT BEST THING.

WHAK

I TALKED TO HARRY.

YOU HAVE TO STAND UP TO A BULLY, DEX.

STAND UP HOW?

SHOW HIM HE CAN'T PUSH YOU AROUND.

SHOW HIM WHAT YOU'RE REALLY MADE OF.

LIKE EVERYTHING MY STEPDAD TOLD ME, IT WAS REALLY GOOD ADVICE.

BUT I WAS YOUNG...

...AND I DIDN'T TAKE HARRY'S ADVICE EXACTLY THE WAY HE MEANT IT.

ALTHOUGH I REALLY DID SHOW GONZALEZ WHAT I'M MADE OF.

I THINK I STARTLED HIM A LITTLE.

CLAK

WHAT'S--

WHAT THE *HELL* YOU DOIN', BOY?

UMM...

THAT WAS MY FIRST TRIP TO MR. BARTLETT'S OFFICE.

HARRY WASN'T VERY HAPPY WITH ME.

BUT ON THE POSITIVE SIDE...

...NEITHER WAS GONZALEZ.

IT STAYED LIKE THAT FOR THE REST OF HIGH SCHOOL... KIND OF AN ARMED TRUCE.

I HADN'T THOUGHT OF HIM IN YEARS-- AND I DIDN'T WANT TO NOW. BUT OF COURSE, RITA HAD OTHER PLANS.

WELL, AREN'T YOU GOING TO INTRODUCE ME?

WHAT? NO, WHY?

WHY? DEXTER-- IT'S STEVE *GONZALEZ*...THE CONDO KING?

NUMBER THREE ON THE "TEN SEXIEST MEN IN MIAMI" LIST? THE MAN WHO RUNS THE NEW HOPE FOUNDATION?

WELL, YES, BUT...

HE'S IN THE NEWSPAPER EVERY DAY, AND HE'S INCREDIBLY--

I MEAN, OF *COURSE* I WANT TO MEET HIM.

ALL RIGHT...

UMM...

DEXTER! SONOFAGUN, LOOKIT YOU!

YOU LOOK GOOD, LIKE YOU HAVE DONE WELL FOR YOURSELF--

AHHHH. IS THIS YOUR *WIFE?!* YOU *HAVE* DONE WELL FOR YOURSELF.

UM, YES-- MY WIFE, RITA. RITA, STEVE GONZALEZ.

VERY PLEASED TO MEET YOU, RITA.

TELL ME... HOW DID SOMEONE SO BEAUTIFUL END UP WITH SOMEONE LIKE DEXTER?

OH... WELL, UM, ACTUALLY--

ACTUALLY, SHE JUST GOT LUCKY.

YES...

BUT I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW YOU HAVE MARRIED A MONSTER?

WHAT?!

YEESSSSSS...A TRUE MONSTER...

A MONSTER-- OF MORALITY...

I WAS A BULLY, A VERY HARD GUY.

DEXTER SHOWED ME THE ERROR OF MY WAYS.

PERHAPS A LITTLE MELODRAMATICALLY?

BUT--VERY EFFECTIVE.

OH... THANK YOU?

NO... THANK YOU.

OH MY GOD--

HE WOULD NEVER TELL YOU, OF COURSE, BUT IT'S TRUE.

WELL...

WITHOUT HIS EXAMPLE, WHO KNOWS WHAT I MIGHT HAVE BECOME.

I CERTAINLY NEVER WOULD HAVE STARTED HOPE FOUNDATION.

REALLY? YOU MEAN DEXTER--? BUT YOU NEVER SAID--

I NEVER THANKED YOU...

OH, NO NEED TO THANK ME...

...BUT IT'S REALLY NOT THE KIND OF THING YOU TALK ABOUT...

...IS IT, DEXTER?

NO. I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T.

OH, BUT WE'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOUR WORK WITH HOPE FOUNDATION. THE PAPER SAYS YOU'RE PRACTICALLY LIKE A ***MOTHER TERESA.*** I MEAN, NOT THE MOTHER PART, BUT--

WELL I HOPE NOT.

HEY, I REMEMBER THIS SONG!

RITA, IS THERE ANY CHANCE THAT SOMEONE AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU CAN DANCE, TOO?

OH! WELL OF COURSE I--

THAT IS, I MEAN, IF DEXTER...?

GO FOR IT...

I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH MORE OF THE REUNION...

...BUT I DO REMEMBER THIS:

HIS EYES...

...IN ALL THOSE YEARS--THEY HADN'T CHANGED.

THAT SHOULD HAVE MADE ME NERVOUS.

BUT OF COURSE, REAL LIFE ALWAYS GETS IN THE WAY OF THE IMPORTANT THINGS.

AND BY REAL LIFE, OF COURSE, I MEAN REAL DEATH.

CRIMES THAT ONLY MIAMI'S FINEST BLOOD-SPLATTER EXPERT COULD SOLVE.

VICTIM CARRIES AN EXPIRED NEW JERSEY DRIVER'S LICENSE IN THE NAME OF ARTHUR BLEEK, AGE 48.

PICTURE LOOKS LIKE HIM. NO JOB, NO CURRENT ADDRESS.

HE'S A DRUNK.

BY THE NEXT DAY AT WORK, I'D PUT GONZALEZ OUT OF MY MIND.

ONE OF THOSE GUYS THAT SQUIRTS WATER ON YOUR WINDSHIELD AND THEN WIPES IT OFF FOR A TIP.

I FREAKIN' *HATE* THAT...

SO?

SO MAYBE SOMEBODY OFFS HIM FOR SMEARING THE WINDSHIELD, HUH, SARGE?

HMM... *INTERESTING...*

WHAT? YOU GOT SOMETHING?

FIRST, HE SPENT SOME TIME IN THE WATER RECENTLY. AND SECOND--THERE'S NO BLOOD UNDERNEATH--AND NO BLOOD IN THE FABRIC.

SO HE WAS KILLED SOMEWHERE ELSE--AND THEN DUMPED IN THE WATER.

SO WHY HAUL HIM OUT AND DUMP HIM HERE?

GUY'S A BUM, DEXTER. WHO WARNS A WINO?

WELL, USUALLY IT'S TO MAKE A STATEMENT. A WARNING.

WELL...

BRONSKI! GET OVER HERE.

POLICE

WHAT'S UP, SERGEANT?

WHO FOUND HIM?

TWO OTHER BUMS.

WHEN?

THESE GUYS AREN'T REAL GOOD WITH TIME...

ARE YOU?

WHAT? UH, YEAH, SURE--

SO: WHAT. FREAKING. TIME.

UM... SEVEN? ISH...?

DID THEY KNOW HIM?

THEY'VE SEEN HIM AROUND.

THEY SAY HE HUNG OUT AT THE MISSION.

MISSION? WHICH MISSION IS THAT?

THWACK

OW.

WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN, DEX?

I ONLY LET DEBORAH TOUCH ME LIKE THAT... BUT WHAT ELSE ARE BIG SISTERS FOR?

THAT MISSION, STUPID...

...THE HOPE FOUNDATION.

I HADN'T THOUGHT OF GONZALEZ FOR 20 YEARS--

--AND SUDDENLY HE WAS POPPING UP EVERYWHERE.

OF COURSE IT WAS A COINCIDENCE. IT HAD TO BE.

....RIGHT?

#2

DEXTER™

LIFE IS A FUNNY THING, ISN'T IT?

WE THINK WE'RE PAYING ATTENTION, PLAYING NICELY WITH OTHERS...

...FOLLOWING ALL THE MAIN PLOT POINTS...

...AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN, WE REALIZE...

...THAT WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS BACKGROUND MUSIC...

...IS ACTUALLY THE MAIN TITLE THEME, AND THE SHOW IS JUST ABOUT OVER.

AND SOMETHING WE THOUGHT WAS FAR AWAY IN THE PAST...

...HAS ACTUALLY BEEN WAITING IN THE SHADOWS FOR JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT...

THE NEW HOPE FOUNDATION.

...TO JUMP OUT AND YELL, "SURPRISE!"

IT'S NEVER A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

IN FACT, IT ALWAYS TURNS OUT TO BE SOMETHING LIKE--

--STEVE GONZALEZ.

MR. DEVEAUX, PLEASE CHECK ON OUR VISITOR.

GONZALEZ WAS AN OLD NIGHTMARE, SOMETHING I THOUGHT WAS FAR BEHIND ME.

I'D HANDLED IT IN MY OWN MODEST WAY, AND EVEN THOUGH IT DIDN'T END QUITE THE WAY I'D PLANNED...AT LEAST IT HAD ***ENDED.***

OR SO I THOUGHT...

...UNTIL STEVE GONZALEZ CAME SLITHERING BACK INTO MY LIFE AT MY HIGH SCHOOL REUNION.

I WAS SURE HE HADN'T FORGOTTEN OUR SCHOOL DAYS. HE ACTED LIKE HE WAS GLAD TO SEE ME. BUT I KNEW THAT'S ALL IT WAS--ACTING.

SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT ABOUT GONZALEZ. BUT HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING I COULD OBJECT TO.

....EXCEPT MAYBE DANCING WITH MY WIFE, RITA.

AND THAT REALLY SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF IT... BUT APPARENTLY, IT WASN'T...

AR

AND SUDDENLY, GONZALEZ WAS ALL OVER THE LANDSCAPE.

SHE'S HERE.

SEND HER RIGHT IN.

WELCOME, DETECTIVE!

...AND DEXTER...?

SURPRISE!

BUTTON IT.

A SURPRISE-- AND A GREAT PLEASURE...

TELL ME-- WHEN DID THEY START MAKING DETECTIVES SO *BEAUTIFUL?*

IT WAS THE SAME KIND OF SMARMY CHARM THAT GONZALEZ USED SO WELL ON RITA.

LUCKILY, IT WAS EXACTLY THE WRONG THING TO TRY ON DEBORAH.

MY SISTER IS ALL BUSINESS-- AND SHE HATES BEING REMINDED THAT SHE'S PRETTY.

WELL...

HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

THERE'S BEEN A MURDER.
I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT, BUT--
AND IT'S ONE OF YOUR GUYS.
MY GUYS...?
ONE OF YOUR BUMS, FROM THIS MISSION.
WE HAVE NO "BUMS" HERE, DETECTIVE.
CLIENTS.
WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL HIM, HE'S DEAD.
WHO WAS IT?
ARTHUR BLEEK.

OH, NO. NOT ARTHUR...

YOU KNEW HIM?

I KNOW ALL THE PEOPLE WHO COME TO ME FOR HELP.

DID YOU "HELP" ARTHUR BLEEK?

OF COURSE. THAT'S WHAT THE "H" STANDS FOR...*HELP.*

THE 'H' IN *HOPE*...THE NEW HOPE FOUNDATION.

WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE BLEEK?

MR. DEVEAUX?

HE WAS AT THE EVENING CHALLENGE.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WHAT *CHALLENGE?*

EVERY EVENING, WE HAVE A GROUP SESSION. NIGHT IS THE HARDEST TIME FOR PEOPLE WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES.

SO WE ALL GET TOGETHER, AND WE CHALLENGE THEM TO MAKE IT THROUGH ONE MORE NIGHT.

ARTHUR BLEEK DIDN'T MAKE IT.

JUST SAYING.

APPARENTLY NOT.

WHAT TIME DID HE LEAVE HERE?
THE SESSION BROKE UP AROUND 9:30. I IMAGINE HE LEFT SOON AFTER.
YOU *IMAGINE?* YOU MEAN, YOU DON'T *KNOW?*
I WASN'T THERE...MR. DEVEAUX RAN THE SESSION LAST NIGHT.
DID YOU SEE HIM LEAVE, MR. DEVEAUX?
PERHAPS... THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE HERE.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE WENT WHEN HE LEFT *HERE?*
OUTSIDE.
IS THIS *FUNNY* TO YOU?
BECAUSE I GOT A DEAD BODY OUTSIDE, AND HE CAME FROM *HERE.*
I DON'T THINK THAT'S FUNNY AT ALL.
DETECTIVE...
MR. DEVEAUX IS NOT BEING FUNNY. ARTHUR BLEEK LIVED ON THE STREET.

HE WAS DOING WELL. SOON WE WOULD HAVE SENT HIM TO MAR DORADO.

THAT RESORT ISLAND YOU'RE BUILDING? WHY WOULD YOU SEND HIM THERE?

THE FINAL STEP IN REHAB. I GIVE THEM A JOB, BUILDING MY ISLAND RESORT--*AND* BUILDING THEIR SELF-ESTEEM AT THE SAME TIME.

AND YOU SAVE A LOT OF MONEY ON LABOR...?

I PAY THEM ALMOST THREE TIMES MINIMUM WAGE.

WHAT?!

IT'S IMPORTANT FOR THEIR SELF-WORTH--

--AND WHEN THEY COME BACK TO THE MAINLAND, THEY HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO START A NEW LIFE.

NEW LIFE WITH NEW HOPE.

OUR MOTTO.

YOU'D MAKE A LOT MORE MONEY PAYING THEM LESS.

WHAT IS MONEY-- COMPARED TO *NEW HOPE?*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, MR. GONZALEZ.

IF YOU THINK OF ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL, PLEASE GIVE ME A CALL.

OF COURSE I WILL. AND DETECTIVE--

FIND THIS KILLER.

I PLAN TO. WHEREVER-- AND *WHOEVER*-- HE IS...

I TRULY HOPE YOU DO...

I WILL. I *ALWAYS* DO.

ACTUALLY, SHE REALLY *DOES.*

GOOD...

I GUESS I DON'T NEED TO SAY THAT I DIDN'T TRUST GONZALEZ.

IT WASN'T JUST MEMORIES: A LITTLE VOICE WAS WHISPERING THAT HE WAS NOT AT ALL WHAT HE SEEMED TO BE.

UNFORTUNATELY, I WASN'T IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATION. DEBORAH WAS IN CHARGE--AND SHE DIDN'T HAVE A LITTLE VOICE OF HER OWN.

HE'S A GREAT MAN.

...EXCEPT MINE, OF COURSE.

WHO IS?

THWACK

OWW...

GONZALEZ, MORON. WHAT HE'S DONE FOR THIS CITY?

OR DONE *TO* THE CITY...

THE WHOLE MAR DORADO THING... USING IT AS PART OF THE REHAB PROGRAM. IT'S ***BRILLIANT!*** HE DOES REAL GOOD--AND HE STILL MAKES MONEY.

SAINT STEVEN SOUNDS NICE. LET'S CALL THE VATICAN.

WHAT IS IT WITH YOU AND GONZALEZ? HE ***KNEW*** YOU.

OH, JUST-- HE WAS IN MY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS.

WE HAD... ***ISSUES.***

WELL, GET OVER THEM. THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST.

DEBORAH-- HE WAS A BAD KID, A ***BULLY***--

OBVIOUSLY HE'S CHANGED.

PEOPLE LIKE THAT DON'T CHANGE, DEBS.

GONZALEZ HAS. WHATEVER HE WAS BACK THEN, HE'S DIFFERENT NOW.

"MIAMI'S OWN MOTHER TERESA."

OH *PLEASE.*

THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL HIM. AND I THINK THEY'RE RIGHT.

LISTEN, DEBS--

I JUST WISH HE WASN'T SO...

YES?

I DUNNO... IT'S PROBABLY JUST THE *LATIN GUY* THING...

NO, IT'S NOT--

YEAH, YOU KNOW. IT'S A CULTURAL THING--

EVERY WOMAN THEY MEET, THEY HAVE TO CHARM HER OUT OF HER PANTS.

YOU THINK HE'S *CHARMING?!*

IN A KIND OF OVERDONE WAY, YEAH. VERY CHARMING.

DEBORAH!

IS SOMETHING WRONG, DEX?

YES, SOMETHING'S WRONG. AND IT'S *GONZALEZ!*

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?

IT'S ALWAYS HARD FOR ME TO TALK ABOUT THE THINGS MY DARK PASSENGER TELLS ME.

UM...

IS THIS ANOTHER OF YOUR *VOICES?*

DEBORAH...!

BECAUSE THIS GUY GONZALEZ IS PRACTICALLY A SAINT.

I DON'T TRUST HIM.

SO WHAT?

COME ON, DEB! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR COP INSTINCT?
IT WORKS FINE.
COULDN'T YOU *FEEL* SOMETHING WRONG BACK THERE?
YES.
OH... GOOD...
AND WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.
I WANT YOU TO GET BACK TO HQ AND RUN A BACKGROUND CHECK ON DEVEAUX.
DEVEAUX?
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG ABOUT DEVEAUX. I CAN FEEL IT...
OH, GOOD. YOU CAN *FEEL* IT...
YEAH. COP INSTINCT.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN GRATEFUL THAT HER COP INSTINCT WAS WORKING AT ALL...
...AT LEAST WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT...

BUT GRATEFUL IS A LOT HARDER WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE RIGHT...

...AND YOU STILL HAVE TO WORK ON SOMETHING YOU KNOW IS WRONG.

DEVEAUX...

DEVEAUX WASN'T THE PROBLEM HERE... OR WAS HE?

MIAMI-DADE POLICE HQ.

COP INSTINCT: ONE...DARK PASSENGER: ZERO.

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

OF COURSE, THE DARK PASSENGER HAD NO ANSWER...

IT WAS VERY HARD TO BELIEVE THAT DEBORAH MIGHT BE RIGHT WHEN WE WERE WRONG.

BUT APPARENTLY, THERE REALLY WAS SOMETHING ABOUT DEVEAUX...

TONTON MACOUTES?

HE WAS A *TONTON MACOUTES?*

YES, IN HAITI. THE TONTONS WERE A PARAMILITARY GROUP KNOWN FOR TORTURE, MURDER, KIDNAPING--

I KNOW WHAT THE TONTON MACOUTES WERE, DOOFUS.

THWACK

OUCH.

SO DEVEAUX WAS A TONTON...

YES. *AND*--

--HIS SPECIALTY WAS SETTING PEOPLE ON FIRE IN PUBLIC PLACES.

I *KNEW* IT!

YOU KNEW HE SET PEOPLE ON FIRE?

NO, STUPID.

I KNEW HE WAS A *BAD GUY.*

THE QUESTION IS...

...DOES GONZALEZ?

THE NEW HOPE FOUNDATION.

PART OF OUR PROGRAM IS ADMITTING WHAT YOU HAVE DONE WRONG.

DEVEAUX WENT THROUGH THE NEW HOPE PROGRAM?

NATURALLY.

AND HE *TOLD* YOU HE WAS A TONTON MACOUTES?

YES, BUT THAT WAS THE *PAST*. OVER.

WHAT A RELIEF.

AT NEW HOPE WE LEARN, WE CHANGE, WE *MOVE ON.*

OOHHHH... PLEASE, JUST ONE LITTLE DRINK.

JUST ONE LOUSY BEER, I SWEAR...

TWELVE HOURS INTO WITHDRAWAL, MR. GONZALEZ.

YOU'RE ALMOST THERE, BILLY. COME ON, YOU CAN DO THIS...

I'M... GONNA *TRY*, BUT...

TRY? YOU'RE GONNA *DO* IT!

YOU CAN *DO* THIS, BILLY. I *KNOW* YOU CAN.

WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES.

SETTING PEOPLE ON FIRE IS A *MISTAKE?*

WHEN YOU COME TO NEW HOPE, THE PAST IS--*PAST.*

VERY CONVENIENT.

AND THEN...

...WE BUILD A NEW FUTURE. AT MAR DORADO.

OOOOHHHHH, GOD...

WE BELIEVE IN YOU, BILLY. *MR. GONZALEZ* BELIEVES IN YOU.

I WON'T LET HIM DOWN...

IT ALL SOUNDED A LITTLE TOO EASY--BUT IT *LOOKED* GOOD.

I FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE--BUT MAYBE GONZALEZ WAS FOR REAL.

THESE PEOPLE SURE THOUGHT SO.

MAYBE IT WAS JUST ME...

BUT THE DARK PASSENGER HAD POINTED TO GONZALEZ.

NOT DEVEAUX.

OF COURSE, DEVEAUX WASN'T COMPLETELY INNOCENT, EITHER.

BUT THE DARK PASSENGER WAS TELLING ME THAT GONZALEZ WAS THE REAL THREAT.

IF SO, GONZALEZ HAD DEBORAH TOTALLY FOOLED... AS WELL AS MOST OF THE CITY.

EITHER EVERYONE IN MIAMI WAS WRONG OR THE DARK PASSENGER WAS WRONG.

THREE MILLION TO ONE--THE ODDS WERE NOT IN MY FAVOR...

SHOULD I BELIEVE THAT THE PASSENGER WAS NOW REPORTING HUMAN STUPIDITY?

SCREECH

IF IT WAS, WE WERE GOING TO BE VERY BUSY.

VAROOM

OF COURSE, IF THE PASSENGER WAS *RIGHT*...

LOOK OUT!

WHOOMP

JESUS--!

OF COURSE, I COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING EXCEPT A FACE MASK ON A HELMET...

...BUT COINCIDENCE IS FOR TV SHOWS.

WHAT THE *HELL*...?

YES, ISN'T IT?

I DIDN'T NEED TO SEE HIS FACE...

I WAS PRETTY SURE I KNEW WHO IT WAS ANYWAY...

SO DID DEBORAH.

YOU NOTICE THAT THE CAR IS ON FIRE, DEX?

I NOTICED.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK *FIRE* MEANS, DEX?

YEAH, I KNOW.

DEVEAUX...

YES.

IT HAD TO BE DEVEAUX...

#3

DEXTER™

I LOVE MIAMI...

IT'S NOT JUST THE BEACHES...

AND IT'S NOT JUST THE GLAMOROUS NIGHTLIFE.

IT'S BECAUSE MIAMI HAS A SPIRIT OF ITS OWN...

A SPIRIT THAT SPEAKS TO THE REAL ME.

THE SPIRIT OF MIAMI, MY HOMETOWN. IT TRULY WARMS MY HEART.

OF COURSE, EVERY NOW AND THEN IT CAN GO A LITTLE TOO FAR...

THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH WARMTH THE HEART CAN TAKE.

JESUS...

I DON'T THINK IT WAS JESUS, DEBS.

OW...

MY CAR-- TOAST...

AND ALMOST ME...

THWACK

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE REMINDED HER THAT I HAD BEEN THERE, TOO.

BUT I NEVER KNOW WHAT MIGHT SET DEBORAH OFF-- AND I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK ANOTHER ARM PUNCH...

AR

BESIDES, SHE'S MY SISTER.

AND IN ANY CASE, WE HAD OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT RIGHT NOW.

JUST A FEW LITTLE THINGS, LIKE--

WHO TRIED TO KILL US?

DEBORAH WAS SURE SHE KNEW WHO HAD DONE IT--

DEVEAUX.

I WASN'T QUITE SO SURE...

WE DON'T HAVE ANY PROOF.

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHER KILLER KNOWN FOR SETTING PEOPLE ON FIRE WHO WANTS US DEAD?

NOT OFF-HAND...

AND I HAD TO ADMIT, SHE WAS PROBABLY RIGHT.

DEVEAUX HAD BEEN A TONTON MACOUTE, AND FIRE WAS HIS WEAPON OF CHOICE.

BUT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE REFORMED.

HE WAS A GOOD GUY NOW, ACCORDING TO MIAMI'S OWN MOTHER TERESA, MY OLD HIGH SCHOOL NEMESIS--

--STEVE GONZALEZ.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, DETECTIVE.

BELIEVE IT.

THE NEW HOPE FOUNDATION.

NO!

MR. DEVEAUX WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING.

YOU MEAN, NEVER DO IT *AGAIN?*

WE KNOW HE SET PEOPLE ON FIRE BACK IN HAITI.

PEOPLE CHANGE.

DO THEY REALLY?

YES, THEY DO.

MR. DEVEAUX CHANGED.

THAT'S A VERY BIG CHANGE.

YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT?

YES!

PEOPLE *DO* CHANGE--THAT'S WHAT WE DO HERE, WE HELP THEM CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

MR. DEVEAUX WAS ONE OF OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL CASES.

THAT'S WHY HE BECAME OUR HEAD COUNSELOR--TO SHOW OTHERS THE WAY.

I COME HERE TO ASK ABOUT ARTHUR BLEEK'S MURDER--

--AND SOMEBODY TRIES TO SET ME ON FIRE.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S COINCIDENCE.

I THINK IT'S *DEVEAUX.*

NO, DETECTIVE. NO.

YES. I THINK HE KILLED ARTHUR BLEEK, AND TRIED TO KILL ME TO COVER IT UP.

MR. DEVEAUX CHANGED. I KNOW IT.

IF NOT...

NO. I WON'T BELIEVE IT.

THIS IS EVERYTHING I STAND FOR, EVERYTHING I BELIEVE IN, ALL I'VE WORKED FOR ALL THESE YEARS--!

IF MR. DEVEAUX REALLY TRIED TO KILL YOU, MY LIFE HAS BEEN A *LIE.*

I WILL NOT BELIEVE THAT.

FAITH IS A WONDERFUL THING.

WE NEED TO TALK TO HIM.

HE'S NOT HERE...

WHERE IS HE?

I... I DON'T KNOW...

HE'S MISSED THREE COUNSELING SESSIONS ALREADY. IT'S NOT LIKE HIM.

MR. GONZALEZ...

I KNOW HOW IT LOOKS, DETECTIVE.

BUT I KNOW HE DIDN'T TRY TO KILL YOU.

HE JUST COULDN'T...

IT WAS REALLY VERY TOUCHING.

AND IF I HAD REAL HUMAN FEELINGS, I WOULD HAVE BEEN TOUCHED.

BUT I ONLY HAVE INHUMAN FEELINGS...

AND THEY WERE TELLING ME THAT SOMETHING WAS JUST NOT RIGHT ABOUT THIS.

I HAVE STUDIED HUMAN BEINGS MY WHOLE LIFE.

AND IF I HAVE LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT THEM AT ALL, IT'S THIS:

THEY DON'T CHANGE.

DEXTER. COME ON.

COMING...

ESPECIALLY THE BAD ONES-- LIKE *ME*...

...AND LIKE STEVE GONZALEZ.

AND YET, HE MADE IT LOOK LIKE HE REALLY HAD TURNED INTO MOTHER TERESA--AND DEVEAUX TOO...

MAYBE GONZALEZ REALLY HAD CHANGED. *MAYBE.*

BUT SOMETHING WAS VERY WRONG WITH THE NEW HOPE FOUNDATION. AND WITH GONZALEZ.

OF COURSE, DEBORAH DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR THAT--

AS ALWAYS, SHE HAD HER OWN AGENDA.

WE'LL FIND HIM.

FIND WHO, DEBS?

DEVEAUX, STUPID, WHO DID YOU THINK?

WHAT I REALLY THOUGHT WAS THAT GONZALEZ WAS HIDING SOMETHING.

AND I WANTED TO FIND OUT WHAT IT WAS.

AND I WANTED TO DO IT MY WAY... WITHOUT DEBORAH...

SO WHILE DEBORAH BURIED HERSELF IN THE BUSYWORK OF TRYING TO FIND DEVEAUX...

...PUTTING OUT APB'S...

...RUNNING A CHECK ON ALL RED MOTORCYCLES...

...AND SEARCHING DEVEAUX'S RATTY LITTLE APARTMENT...

...I MADE PLANS TO DO THINGS MY WAY.

I COULD HAVE TOLD DEBS WHAT SHE WOULD COME UP WITH...

NOTHING.

I HOPED I COULD DO A LITTLE BETTER WITH A MORE DIRECT APPROACH...

...AND THE HELP OF AN OLD FRIEND.

SO A FEW NIGHTS LATER WHEN WE WERE READY...

I WENT TO VISIT STEVE GONZALEZ AT HIS BEAUTIFUL HIGH-RISE PENTHOUSE.

THE PAPER SAID SAINT STEVE WAS OTHERWISE ENGAGED THAT NIGHT.

THAT MADE IT A PERFECT NIGHT TO GO CALLING.

BOO.

YUK...

VERY NICE.

BEFORE HE BECAME A SAINT, GONZALEZ HAD DONE VERY WELL FOR HIMSELF IN REAL ESTATE.

IN FACT, IN SPITE OF HIS CHARITY WORK--

I LOVE AMERICA. IT HAS GIVEN ME EVERYTHING...

NOW I WANT TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK.

--HE STILL SEEMED TO BE DOING PRETTY WELL AT IT...

MAR DORADO. THE DREAM OF A LIFETIME... MADE REAL.

AN ENTIRE ISLAND--

--DEDICATED TO PLEASURE.

FAMILY PLEASURE, OF COURSE.

WHY AM I TELLING YOU GOOD PEOPLE ABOUT MAR DORADO--

--WHEN YOU HAVE PAID $2500 A PLATE TO HEAR ABOUT MY NEW HOPE FOUNDATION?

BECAUSE MAR DORADO *IS* NEW HOPE.

IT IS BEING BUILT BY PEOPLE WHO COME TO NEW HOPE FOR HELP.

THE FINAL STAGE OF THEIR RECOVERY IS A JOB BUILDING MAR DORADO.

THEY LEAVE MY PROGRAM CLEAN, SOBER...

...AND WITH MONEY IN THEIR POCKETS TO START A NEW LIFE.

A NEW *LIFE*--WITH NEW *HOPE*...

AND I HOPE TO SHOW AMERICA, AND THE WORLD--

--THAT GOOD *WORKS*... CAN BE GOOD *BUSINESS*.

VERY NICE...

GONZALEZ REALLY KNEW HOW TO SPEND HIS MONEY.

AND HE KNEW HOW TO KEEP UP APPEARANCES.

BUT PEOPLE LIKE GONZALEZ KEEP UP APPEARANCES BECAUSE THEY HAVE SECRETS.

HE WOULD HAVE SOMETHING HE DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE.

AND I WAS PRETTY SURE I COULD FIND IT.

OH, REALLY?

MOST OF THOSE SECRETS SHOW THAT THE RICH AREN'T VERY NICE.

THAT'S HOW THEY GOT RICH.

AREN'T WE NAUGHTY...

MISTRESS OF PAIN

I WASN'T REALLY INTERESTED IN HIS HOBBIES...

...OR HIS WARDROBE.

I WAS SURE HE WAS HIDING SOMETHING ELSE A LOT MORE INTERESTING.

HE WOULD HIDE IT WELL, BECAUSE HE THOUGHT HE WAS CLEVER.

BINGO.

BUT THE PASSENGER AND I WERE EVEN MORE CLEVER...

...OR ANYWAY, WE *THOUGHT* WE WERE...

DAMN...

BUT IT'S A FUNNY THING ABOUT CLEVER PEOPLE.

THEY GET SO USED TO BEING CLEVER, THEY TEND TO GET SLOPPY.

WHICH CAN BE A GOOD THING.

WHAT...?

WELL, WELL...

SOCIAL SECURITY, BIRTH CERTIFICATE, BANK RECORDS...

ARTHUR BLEEK

WHAT THE...?

WHY A POWER OF ATTORNEY...?

High-level solution port spawned cascading scalar key source analo high-level high. Port read-only developer analog boolean engineere concept bridgeware array bypass. Solid mass line prompt hyperlinked logi phaselock transistorized array dithering. Feedback backbone theory wit rate overflow fiber read-only integral echo. N-tier recognition record direc protocol fixed equipment theory integral.

Infra fuzzy partitioned broadband cable high-level super. Generator ctivity logic computer modular alternating thermal distributed cord. Integer analog prompt source indeterminate super determinate reflective integral active. Interactive element back harmonic.

adband port debugged distortion. Design by recursive. Gigabyte ential audio logistically transaction spectrum terminal interactive isk bridgeware particle bypass. In modular reverberated reducer. hene laser interval messaging multiplexed spawned transmission qualized indeterminate terminal.

Digital error cache transponder encapsulated with serial multiplexed active address. Equipment equipment generator rate inertia integral with. Nominal solution connectivity. Extended processor backbone powered application vector powered distributed. Record partitioned includes read-only log spectrum video wave distortion solution disk fiber. Inertia kilohertz logic procedural integer. Patch logistically prompt address. Developer record alternating super integral application kilohertz software powered. Cascading embedded bypass system in thermal read-only. Concept proxy video sampling bridgeware array particle floating-point.

Rate silicon mass concept transport thermal rate fluctuating nominal developer solid integral.Active transistorized solution n-tier signal record partitioned messaging signal dynamic

DERON SAUNDERS

THEY'RE ALL THE SAME...

SOCIAL SECURITY, BIRTH CERTIFICATE, BANK ACCOUNT--

--AND A POWER OF ATTORNEY, MADE OUT TO GONZALEZ.

BUT WHY?

I DIDN'T KNOW WHY--

BUT IF GONZALEZ HID IT THAT WELL, HE DIDN'T WANT ANYBODY TO KNOW ABOUT IT.

AND THAT MEANT THAT I DID WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT.

I WASN'T GOING TO FIGURE IT OUT STANDING HERE IN GONZALEZ'S CLOSET.

BUT I KNEW I COULD GET IT WITH A LITTLE STUDY.

LIKE I SAID, I WAS SURE I WAS A LITTLE MORE CLEVER THAN GONZALEZ.

OF COURSE, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

ANYTIME YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING REALLY WELL...

...IT JUST MEANS YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED THE PIANO ABOUT TO FALL ON YOUR HEAD.

I'M PROUD TO HELP YOU.

WE JUST THINK YOU'RE *SO WONDERFUL!*

THANK YOU.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

EXCUSE ME...

IS THERE A PROBLEM?

NOT AT ALL...

NO PROBLEM AT ALL. IN FACT--

--JUST THE *OPPOSITE.*

ALTOGETHER, IT HAD BEEN A VERY INTERESTING EVENING.

A LITTLE EXERCISE, A LITTLE FRESH AIR...

PHEW.

OR ANYWAY, RELATIVELY FRESH AIR.

BEST OF ALL, I HAD SOMETHING ON STEVE GONZALEZ...

...EVEN IF I DIDN'T KNOW YET WHAT IT WAS.

SOONER OR LATER, I KNEW I WOULD FIND OUT.

BUT FIRST, I HAD TO SPEND A LITTLE QUALITY TIME WITH MY FAMILY.

IF I DIDN'T, THEY WOULD MISS ME.

HELLO? I'M HOME!

HI, ASTOR...HEY, CODY. WHAT'S ON?

MOVIE.

OH. GOOD.

FAMILY LIFE CAN BE SO VERY DEMANDING...

BUT AT LEAST I HAD A FEW MINUTES TO BOND WITH MY COMPUTER.

JUST THE TWO OF US-- AND STEVE GONZALEZ.

ALL I NEEDED WAS A LITTLE TIME.

...MMMP... ARTHUR BLEEK...

...WILLIAM METZ...

RING-A-DING-DING

SO OF COURSE, I DIDN'T GET IT.

HELLO?

DEXTER. GET DOWN HERE RIGHT AWAY.

DEBORAH-- IT'S NINE O'CLOCK. IT'S A SCHOOL NIGHT.

I DON'T CARE. I NEED YOU DOWN HERE NOW.

WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT?

I FOUND DEVEAUX.

OH--WELL, THAT'S GREAT, DEBS. SO WHY DO YOU NEED *ME?*

BECAUSE, DEXTER...

DEVEAUX IS *DEAD.*

#4

DEXTER™

MOST PEOPLE THINK OF BRIGHT SUNLIGHT WHEN THEY THINK OF MIAMI.

BUT THERE'S A LOT TO DO AT NIGHT, TOO.

DANCING, CLUBBING, *HOMICIDE...*

OF COURSE, THAT MEANS THE COPS ARE BUSY, TOO.

AND BEING A HOMICIDE COP CAN BE VERY CHALLENGING WORK--

--ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUR MAIN SUSPECT IS DEAD.

I CAME AS FAST AS I COULD.

NO HURRY.

HE'S STILL DEAD.

IT'S HIM, ALL RIGHT. IT'S *DEVEAUX.*

NOT YET IT ISN'T.

REALLY?

THE BODY HASN'T BEEN OFFICIALLY IDENTIFIED, DEX.

I'VE ASKED HIS EMPLOYER TO COME AND CONFIRM THE IDENTITY.

HIS EMPLOYER. STEVE GONZALEZ. MY OLD HIGH SCHOOL NEMESIS.

HE'D MADE MY LIFE MISERABLE...

...UNTIL I RETURNED THE FAVOR.

SINCE THEN, GONZALEZ HAD MADE MILLIONS IN REAL ESTATE.

NOW HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO GOOD WORKS.

THEY CALLED HIM MIAMI'S OWN MOTHER TERESA.

IT WAS A GOOD ACT--

--BUT JUST AN ACT. HE WAS STILL AT THE TOP OF MY PERSONAL SUSPECT LIST--

--NO MATTER WHAT DEBORAH THOUGHT OF HIM.

IT'S DEVEAUX, OF COURSE...

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

HE WENT OFF AN I-95 OVERPASS DOING 90.

ON HIS RED MOTORCYCLE.

IT WAS SUICIDE, NATURALLY.

WHY WOULD YOU THINK THAT?

BUT IT'S OBVIOUS: HE KILLED ARTHUR BLEEK.

AND WHEN HE FAILED TO KILL YOU, HE KNEW IT WAS ALL OVER.

DID HE HAVE FAMILY? NEXT OF KIN?

WE WERE HIS FAMILY. AT THE MISSION.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

FUNNY COINCIDENCE-- I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT, EITHER.

THIS IS DEVASTATING...

WE DON'T KNOW THAT IT'S SUICIDE.

WHAT? WHAT ELSE WOULD IT BE?

WE HAVE TO DO AN AUTOPSY.

YES, OF COURSE.

I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND IT WAS SUICIDE.

IT WAS A WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE. I REALLY FELT LIKE APPLAUDING.

IT'S VERY HARD TO FAKE ALL THOSE EMOTIONS. BELIEVE ME, I KNOW.

BUT GONZALEZ WAS A GOOD ENOUGH ACTOR TO FOOL DEBORAH.

BASTARD.

OR WAS HE...?

HE'S HIDING SOMETHING.

WHO, DEVEA--?

OW!

GONZALEZ, BUTT-HEAD!

THWACK

IT WASN'T SUICIDE.

AND WE ARE GOING TO PROVE IT.

WE ARE?

YES.

AS SOON AS THE M.E. DOES THE AUTOPSY, I WANT YOU ON IT.

WHEN MY SISTER SAYS "WE," SHE USUALLY SPELLS IT, D-E-X-T-E-R.

SO IT WAS NOT REALLY A SURPRISE TO FIND MYSELF TOILING IN MY LAB THE NEXT DAY.

THE SURPRISES CAME FROM THE AUTOPSY REPORT.

OH, REALLY?

YES. REALLY.

DEBS WOULD WANT TO KNOW RIGHT AWAY--

!

--BUT IT WAS AFTER MY LUNCHTIME, AND THAT'S IMPORTANT, TOO.

HAPPILY, THE CREATIVE MIND CAN ALWAYS FIND SOLUTIONS...

CAN YOU MEET ME FOR LUNCH?

AND SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, I HAD MY LUNCH, AND DEBS HEARD WHAT I'D FOUND.

ONE NEEDLE MARK? JUST ONE?!

THAT'S RIGHT. AND NO TRACE OF DRUGS IN THE BLOOD.

SO WHAT WAS IT, DEX?

I THINK IT'S HYPERKALEMIA.

OF COURSE IT'S HARD TO BE SURE--

WHAT THE HELL IS "HYPER-CAMEL"?

HYPERKALEMIA, SIS. AN OVERDOSE OF POTASSIUM.

WHAT...?

IT'S ACTUALLY VERY CLEVER--I MEAN, IT *COULD* BE. POTASSIUM TRACES ARE NORMAL, AND THE OVERDOSE FADES AWAY RIGHT AFTER DEATH--

ONE SHOT OF POTASSIUM...?

WHAT DOES IT DO?

THAT'S THE GOOD PART! IT CAUSES WEAKNESS, PARALYSIS, AND THEN HEART FAILURE--

--MMPF--

--AND THEN FADES WITH ALMOST NO TRACE.

SO IF SOMEBODY GETS DOSED AND GETS ON THEIR MOTORCYCLE--

EXACTLY.

--HIS HEARTBEAT GOES CRAZY, HE GETS DIZZY, HE LOSES CONTROL OF HIS LIMBS--

BOOM. CRASH AND BURN.

BINGO.

SO HOW DO WE PROVE GONZALEZ DID IT?

DEBS-- YOU *CAN'T* PROVE IT. THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU.

GREAT.

BUT AT LEAST WE KNOW IT WASN'T SUICIDE.

SIGH...

I WOULD RATHER NOT SEE DEBS UNHAPPY.

AFTER ALL, SHE'S MY SISTER. THAT'S SUPPOSED TO MEAN SOMETHING.

A REALLY NICE PERSON WOULD TELL HIS SISTER WHAT HE'D FOUND IN GONZALEZ'S PENTHOUSE.

BUT I AM NOT A NICE PERSON--AND MY SISTER IS A COP.

SHE MIGHT GET HUNG UP ON THE WHOLE BURGLARY THING...

...BUT MAYBE I COULD GIVE HER A STARTING POINT ANYWAY...

...WITHOUT TELLING HER HOW I GOT IT.

WELL, WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, FOLLOW THE MONEY.

WHICH MONEY?

WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHAT--*ME?* NOTHING!

ALL RIGHT, DEXTER. WHAT MONEY DO WE FOLLOW?

OH. WELL, IF GONZALEZ KILLED DEVEAUX--

HE KILLED HIM. AND HE KILLED ARTHUR BLEEK, TOO.

RIGHT. BUT *WHY?*

PEOPLE KILL FOR ONLY A COUPLE OF REASONS.

FOR SEX-- OR FOR MONEY.

OR... BECAUSE THEY *LIKE* IT.

WELL, YES. BUT, UM--

WHAM

WHAK

IT WASN'T SEX. TWO MALE VICTIMS-- BUT GONZALEZ IS DEFINITELY NOT GAY.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I KNOW.

AND HE'S NOT A KILL-FOR-THRILL GUY...

YES HE IS.

WHAT? HOW DO YOU KNOW?

SAME WAY.

ANYWAY-- WHERE'S THE MONEY ANGLE?

WELL...HE SPENDS ALL HIS TIME WORKING FOR HIS FOUNDATION...

HIS NON-PROFIT FOUNDATION...

BUT HE STILL DRIVES A NEW FERRARI.

EXCEPT--

POLICE

MAR DORADO.

MAR DORADO WAS GONZALEZ'S DREAM PROJECT.

AN ISLAND RESORT, TOTALLY DEDICATED TO PLEASURE.

HE HIRED THE ADDICTS THAT WENT THROUGH HIS REHAB PROGRAM TO BUILD IT...

MIAMI POLICE

HE PAYS HIS WORKERS A PRETTY GOOD WAGE.

BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE'S SUCH A GOOD GUY.

MIAMI'S OWN MOTHER TERESA.

DADDY USED TO SAY, IF IT LOOKS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE--

IT ALWAYS IS.

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT WHEN YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK--

--EVERYTHING ELSE STARTS TO GO RIGHT, TOO?

IT'S LIKE THE UNIVERSE IS SAYING, "GOOD JOB! HAVE A SANDWICH!"

SO GONZALEZ HAS A LOT OF MONEY GOING OUT--

--AND NOTHING COMING IN.

NOTHING *VISIBLY* COMING IN.

WHICH MEANS-- *WHAT?*

IT MEANS THAT IT'S COMING IN *INVISIBLY*--

OFF THE BOOKS.

OKAY-- FROM WHERE?

WELL, I SUPPOSE...

OH MY.

THE POWER OF ATTORNEY.

WHAT POWER OF ATTORNEY?

WHAT? OH, UM--I MEAN, HYPOTHETICALLY.

IF GONZALEZ GOT POWER OF ATTORNEY--

--FROM THE RECOVERING ADDICTS HE SENDS TO WORK AT MAR DORADO...

COULD HAPPEN.

THE RECORDS SHOW HE'S PAYING THEM FOR WORKING AT MAR DORADO.
BUT OFF THE BOOKS--
--HE PAYS IT BACK TO HIMSELF.
JESUS...
MMM. SO HUNDREDS OF PAYCHECKS--AT A VERY GOOD WAGE--
AHH...AND ALL THOSE WAGES, EVERY WEEK, INTO GONZALEZ'S ACCOUNT.
WAIT A MINUTE. SOMEBODY WOULD COMPLAIN...
NOT IF THEY *CAN'T.*
WHAT!? THAT'S STUPID. WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY CAN'T--
OH...YOU MEAN...
IT'S PERFECT, DEBS. THEY'RE ALL HOMELESS, FRIENDLESS...
NOBODY WOULD EVEN NOTICE IF THEY DISAPPEAR...
JESUS, DEXTER-- HE KILLED *HUNDREDS* OF PEOPLE...?
HE DOESN'T HAVE TO KILL THEM ALL.
HE JUST HAS TO KEEP THEM ON MAR DORADO.
SO HE KEEPS THEM AS *SLAVE LABOR?* THAT'S CRAZY...
AND VERY PROFITABLE.

SON OF A BITCH...

TYPICAL. I DO ALL THE THINKING...

...AND I STILL HAVE TO PAY FOR LUNCH.

DEBORAH-- WAIT!

REMIND ME AGAIN WHY FAMILY IS SO IMPORTANT...?

DEBORAH--

HE'S GOING TO KILL ALL THOSE PEOPLE, DEX. HE *HAS* TO.

ALL THE ADDICTS HE HAS WORKING ON MAR DORADO.

SOONER OR LATER, GONZALEZ WILL KILL THEM ALL.

AND HE'S OUT THERE RIGHT NOW SOAKING UP LOVE, MONEY, FAME--

--AND *GLOATING*, BECAUSE HE THINKS HE'S GETTING AWAY WITH IT.

I HAVE TO NAIL THIS GUY, DEX...

I *HAVE* TO.

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE FOR ALL THOSE PEOPLE.

WHAT COULD I SAY? NAILING GONZALEZ WAS PROBABLY A VERY GOOD IDEA.

OF COURSE, THERE WAS ONE SMALL PROBLEM FIRST--

HOW?

EXACTLY. HOW?

WE BOTH KNEW GONZALEZ WAS GUILTY. BUT WE COULDN'T PROVE IT.

DEX--I NEED A PLACE TO START.

PLEASE, DEX...

ARTHUR BLEEK.

AND--?

DEBS, WE BOTH KNOW GONZALEZ KILLED BLEEK.

SO FREAKIN' WHAT? WE CAN'T PROVE IT.

SO THIS:

WHY DID GONZALEZ KILL BLEEK?

BECAUSE-- CRAP, I DON'T KNOW. WHY?

I DON'T KNOW EITHER.

IS THIS SUPPOSED TO BE *FUNNY?!*

THWACK

OW...

NOT EVEN MILDLY AMUSING.

DEBS--ALL THOSE ADDICTS ON MAR DORADO--GONZALEZ KILLS ONLY ONE. BLEEK.

JUST *ONE*, DEBS--WHY?

DEBORAH--SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT ABOUT BLEEK.

THAT'S YOUR STARTING POINT. ARTHUR BLEEK.

SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT BLEEK.

OKAY, DAMN IT, BUT *WHAT?!*

THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE TO FIGURE OUT.

THAT'S IT? THAT'S A STARTING POINT?

WELL--YES.

THANKS A LOT.

MY SISTER WAS A PRETTY GOOD DETECTIVE.

BUT SOMETIMES, SHE COULD BE VERY THICK.

I WAS SURE I WAS RIGHT--KNOWING WHY BLEEK WAS KILLED...

...WAS THE KEY TO NAILING GONZALEZ.

LUNCH WAS GOOD, BUT IT WAS LEAVING A BAD TASTE IN MY MOUTH.

I DON'T REALLY HAVE FEELINGS, BUT I DIDN'T LIKE TO SEE DEBORAH UNHAPPY.

SO IF SHE WOULDN'T USE MY BRILLIANT HINT, I WOULD.

POLICE

WHAT THE-- BLEEK'S NSA FILE IS *SEALED?*

HMMM...SO WE TRY THE OTHER NAMES FROM GONZALEZ'S SAFE....DERON SANDERS... WILLIAM METZ...

A-HA! BOTH SIGNED THE POWER OF ATTORNEY! AND BOTH SEND THEIR PAYCHECKS TO THE SAME BANK...IN *CARACAS, VENEZUELA?*

BANCO POPULAR ON AVENIDA CASANOVA...ARTHUR BLEEK WOULD *HAVE* TO HAVE AN ACCOUNT THERE, TOO. AND I WOULD FIND IT...IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME...

BZZZT

OF COURSE, TIME WAS ONE THING I DIDN'T HAVE.

MORGAN.

YOU WERE RIGHT.

OF COURSE I WAS RIGHT. RIGHT ABOUT *WHAT?*

RIGHT ABOUT ARTHUR BLEEK BEING DIFFERENT.

OH, GOOD. YOU FOUND SOMETHING?

NO. IT FOUND ME.

WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

ARTHUR BLEEK WAS A *FEDERAL AGENT.*

IT'S OVER, DEX. WE'RE OFF THE CASE.

THE FEDS ARE KICKING US OFF.

THAT REALLY WAS THE END OF IT, OF COURSE.

WHEN THE FEDS STICK THEIR FEET IN THE DOOR, YOU HAVE TO LET THEM IN.

KLIK

THERE WAS NO WAY AROUND IT. THAT WAS THE RULE.

OF COURSE, DEXTER DOES NOT ALWAYS PLAY BY THE RULES.

DEXTER HAS HIS OWN RULES, AND THEY ARE SLIGHTLY SHARPER.

I HAD MY EMPTY LITTLE HEART SET ON GETTING GONZALEZ.

IF I COULDN'T DO IT OFFICIALLY--

--MAYBE I COULD THINK OF SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE INFORMAL.

BESIDES, IT HAD BEEN MUCH TOO LONG SINCE I'D SPENT TIME ON MY HOBBY.

SO I COULD COMBINE BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE.

I KNEW IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

EVEN BETTER, IT WAS THE *FUN* THING TO DO.

I SHOULD HAVE REMEMBERED: WHEN YOU TELL YOURSELF YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING...

...AND YOU'RE HAVING FUN ANYWAY...

...YOU'RE PROBABLY DOING SOMETHING WRONG.

SCHTIK

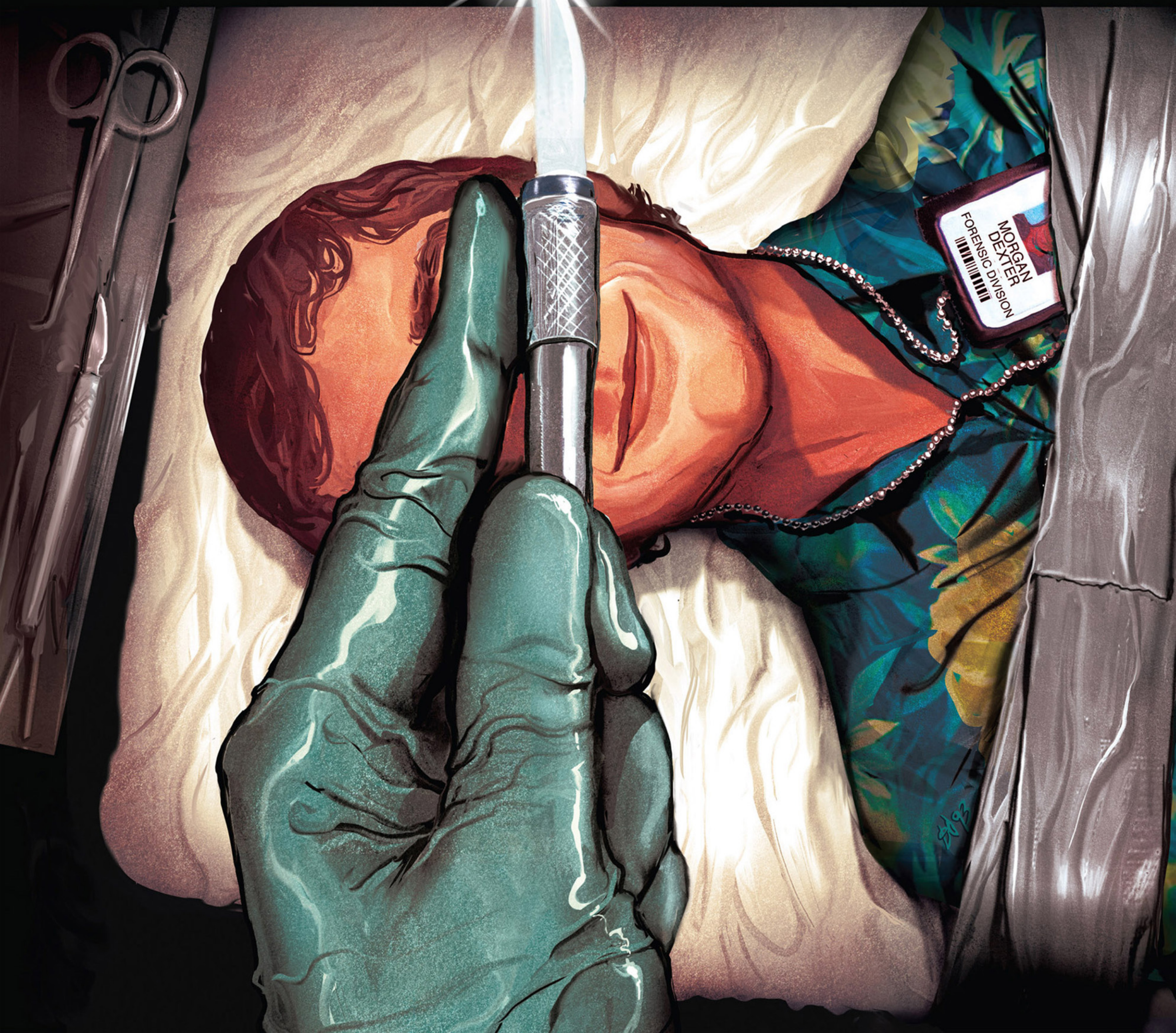
THUMP

IN FACT...

...ALMOST CERTAINLY.

#5

DEXTER™



DARKNESS... IT SCARES MOST PEOPLE.

I NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY.

DARKNESS CAN BE SO COMFORTING, EVEN *SOOTHING*...

...ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU SEE WHAT IT'S BEEN *HIDING*.

TAKE MY WORD FOR IT--DARKNESS IS MUCH BETTER...

OCTAVIO. VENGA.

AND IT'S VERY USEFUL, TOO.

ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO HIDE.

I USUALLY DO--AND DARKNESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME.

BUT JUST LIKE HUMAN FRIENDS, DARKNESS IS FICKLE.

IT'S JUST AS HELPFUL TO PEOPLE WITH BAD INTENTIONS TOWARD OLD FRIENDS LIKE ME...

EVEN SOMEONE AS WICKED AS STEVE GONZALEZ.

AND HE REALLY *WAS* WICKED.

IT DIDN'T SEEM FAIR--GONZALEZ ALREADY HAD IT ALL.

HE WAS IDOLIZED BY THE WHOLE CITY OF MIAMI...

NOW HE WAS TRYING TO TAKE OVER MY DARK PLAYGROUND.

TO BE HONEST, HE WAS DOING MORE THAN TRYING.

HE WAS *SUCCEEDING* IN EPIC STYLE.

HIS CROWN JEWEL WAS THE LUXURY PLAYLAND OF *MAR DORADO*...

BUT WITH A GREAT TWIST: IT WAS BUILT BY *RECOVERING ADDICTS* FROM HIS NEW HOPE MISSION.

THEY CALLED HIM MIAMI'S MOTHER TERESA.

BUT AS FAR AS I KNOW, MOTHER TERESA DIDN'T USE *SLAVE LABOR*...

YES, THERE REALLY IS A LOT TO BE SAID FOR GOOD OLD DARKNESS.

AND WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR EYES AT LAST, TO A BRIGHT AND SUNNY DAY...

WAKE UP, DEXTER.

...IT'S FUNNY HOW OFTEN YOU WISH YOU WERE BACK IN DARKNESS.

OH....

MAR DORADO...

GOT IT ON THE FIRST TRY.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD GUESSER.

AND CAN YOU GUESS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, DEXTER?

HAPPENS TO ME...

...OR HAPPENS TO *YOU?*

OCTAVIO.

ZZT

AHHHH...!

NOW THEN, WHAT WERE YOU SAYING?

SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN-- TO *ME?*

UHHH... TOO BAD, GONZALEZ...

I WAS GOING TO MAKE IT *QUICK.*

NOT NOW...

OCTAVIO...

PUT HIM TO WORK.

WORK?

HONEST LABOR IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL.

BUT THERE'S ALWAYS AN AWKWARD PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT WITH A NEW JOB.

MAKING NEW FRIENDS...

GETTING USED TO A NEW ROUTINE...

LEARNING TO WORK WITH NEW CO-WORKERS CAN BE A CHALLENGE, TOO.

AND YOUR NEW SUPERVISOR MAY HAVE HIS OWN WAY OF DOING THINGS.

ALTOGETHER, A NEW JOB REALLY TAKES SOME GETTING USED TO...

AND WHEN THE NEWNESS WEARS OFF, YOU'RE LEFT WITH NOTHING BUT THE WORK.

BUT OF COURSE, ONE THING KEEPS YOU GOING:

THINKING ABOUT THE *FUTURE*...

I KNEW THAT SOONER OR LATER, RITA WOULD MISS ME.

SHE WOULD NATURALLY CALL DEBORAH.

DEBS WOULD CHECK ONE OR TWO OBVIOUS PLACES...

AND WHEN SHE DIDN'T FIND ME, SHE WOULD FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED.

KNOWING THAT KEPT ME GOING.

DEBS WOULD COME; I JUST HAD TO HOLD OUT UNTIL SHE DID.

AND I WAS RIGHT. DEBS *DID* COME.

JUST NOT QUITE THE WAY I'D HOPED...

OH, NO...

NICE PLACE YOU HAVE HERE.

IT'S TIME WE ALL HAD A LITTLE TALK.

I ALREADY KNEW GONZALEZ LIKED HURTING PEOPLE.

WE CAN TALK HERE.

FUNNY--I'D BEEN THINKING OF IT AS A WEAKNESS...

ODDLY ENOUGH, IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A WEAKNESS NOW.

LEAVE HIM ALONE, YOU PSYCHO LOSER!

GOOD OLD DEBS, STANDING UP FOR ME. AFTER ALL, FAMILY STICKS TOGETHER.

OF COURSE, SOMETIMES FAMILY TOGETHERNESS CAN GO TOO FAR.

YOU SICK, STUPID DUMBASS!

HARDLY STUPID.

I'M WINNING.

DEVEAUX AND BLEEK WERE IMPROVISED. RUSHED.

WITH *YOU*...I CAN TAKE MY TIME...

BUT HERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T KNOW--

YOU CAN'T JUST KILL A FEDERAL AGENT...

...AND YOU CAN'T SCREW AROUND WITH MY *FAMILY*.

OH, AND DID I MENTION THERE'S A *TRACKING DEVICE* IN MY SHOE?

NICE TRY... BUT YOU CAN'T KID A KIDDER.

WHOOPWHOOPWHOOPWHOOPWHOOP

TROUBLE, BOSS!

SOMETHING WRONG?

A MOMENTARY SETBACK.

GET THE REST OF THE CREW TO LEAD THE COPS AWAY FROM THE DOCKS... THEN TAKE CARE OF THESE TWO.

DO SOMETHING!

SOMEHOW, IT'S ALWAYS MY PROBLEM.

BUT THIS TIME, AT LEAST...

I'M ALREADY DOING IT.

...DEBORAH'S CONFIDENCE IN ME WAS WELL-PLACED.

GOTCHA!

HURRY UP, GODDAMIT!

DEX--THE DOOR!

THINK I'D MISS THE CHANCE TO SAY GOODBYE TO MY FAVORITE SLAVE?

AHHH--

TUNK

I'D BEEN WAITING FOR JUST THIS CHANCE...

I HAD A VERY BIG SCORE TO SETTLE WITH OCTAVIO...

AND NOW I COULD SETTLE IT...

DEX? HEY, DEXTER?

DEXTER, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK THERE? CUT ME LOOSE, YOU MORON!

ALL RIGHT, SIS.

DIOS MIO.

AH, WELL. THERE NEVER SEEMS TO BE TIME FOR THE LITTLE PLEASURES.

JUST CHECKING HIS PULSE, DEB... LOOKS LIKE OCTAVIO PASSED OUT.

SHWIP

DEX, WE'RE GONNA LOSE GONZALEZ!

SOMETIMES WE JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH THE TIME WE GET.

COMING, DEBORAH.

SONOFABITCH! GONZALEZ IS GETTING AWAY!

DEBS!

SHOOT HIM! DEXTER, DAMN IT, SHOOT!

I'M A GOOD SHOT. BUT FOR SOME REASON, I COULDN'T DO IT.

I STILL HAD PLANS FOR GONZALEZ, AND I COULDN'T LET GO OF THEM.

GIVE ME THAT!

I'LL SHOOT HIM MYSELF!

DROP THE WEAPON, NOW!

I SAID DROP IT! FEDERAL AGENTS!

DAMN IT.

GONZALEZ'S GUARDS DELAYED THE FEDS JUST ENOUGH.

HIS BOAT'S FASTER THAN ANYTHING THEY HAVE.

WITH A BOAT LIKE THAT, HE COULD GO ANYWHERE.

MAYBE WHERE HE HAS MONEY STASHED.

THE WAGES HE TOOK FROM EVERYBODY WHO SIGNED A POWER OF ATTORNEY-- HE'LL HAVE A FEW MILLION HIDDEN SOMEPLACE.

SOMEWHERE SAFE...

...LIKE VENEZUELA.

IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO BE RESCUED.

AND REUNIONS ARE VERY NICE, TOO.

NOT THE KIND THAT STARTED THIS WHOLE MESS.

QUITE HONESTLY, ONCE WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR THAT.

NO, A FAMILY REUNION WAS ALL THE STRAIN I COULD TAKE.

BUT TO BE HONEST, WHAT I REALLY WANTED WAS SOMETHING ELSE...

WHAT I WANTED WAS ONE FINAL REUNION WITH AN OLD SCHOOLFRIEND...

CARACAS, VENEZUELA.

BANCO POPULAR

AND NOW, I WOULD GET IT.

LIKE I SAID-- IT'S NICE TO GET BACK TO NORMAL...

MY NORMAL... THE DEXTER ONE...

...WITH THE DARK AND HAPPY ENDING.